DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 059 797 RC 005 936

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TITLE	The Agricultural Workforce and Rural Development: The Plight of the Migrant Worker.
INSTITUTION	Montana State Univ., Bozeman. Montana Agricultural Experiment Station.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	[71]
NOTE	28p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Community Relations; Cultural Background; Education; *Employment Patterns; Federal Legislation; Federal Programs; Income; Job Placement; Job Training; *Mexican Americans; *Migrant Workers; *Needs; *Rural Development; Social Background; Unions
IDENTIFIERS	Montana

ABSTRACT

Discussed in this report are the Mexican American migrant agricultural workers who migrate annually to Montana. Much of the information included was collected as part of a study of educational programs for migrants undertaken during the summer of 1970. The report discusses topics such as the cultural and social backgrounds of these migrants, housing, community relations, employment, income, education, job training, rural economic development, human resource development, and the unionization of migrants. (NQ)

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THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE PLIGHT OF THE MIGRANT WORKER

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To be Published by the
Agricultural Experiment Station
Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana
[1971]

RC005936

PREFACE

Very little published information has been available on agricultural labor in Montana. This report describes and discusses the role of one segment - the Mexican-American migrant workers who come to the Yellowstone Valley of Eastern Montana each summer. Much of the information was collected as part of a study of educational programs for migrant people undertaken during the summer of 1970, supported by the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Much of the original field work and initial report preparation was undertaken by Rick Driscoll and William R. Lassey. The present manuscript was prepared in draft form by Gerald Navratil and completed by William R. Lassey.

Mrs. Pat Lewis and Mrs. Kathy Huttinga were responsible for preparation of several drafts of the manuscript in preparation for publication.

The manuscript benefited substantially from the very helpful suggestions of Dr. Wayne Larson, Dr. Martin Burris, and Dr. Glenn Hartman.

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INTRODUCTION

Between 5,000 and 7,500 migrant people come into the towns and rural areas of the Yellowstone Valley every summer as the sugar beets and beans begin to sprout. They remain until the beets have been thinned and the beans and beets thoroughly weeded. Most of them leave Texas in mid-spring, work their way north and east and return home in late October (9:2).

They are strangers to most Montanans, people from another place who often speak only a foreign language and have unfamiliar customs. They often live in modest dwellings and have little contact with local people. They travel and work in groups much as previous generations of the same families have done before them. They seem a happy people; they smile often and laugh easily. Families are large, and reservoirs of affection. The children appear to enjoy life.

Yet, they are identified in carefully documented studies as one of the most troubled minorities in the U.S. Their average annual income is among the lowest of any group in the nation. Health care is poor; educational levels are notoriously low; housing conditions are far below national norms. By almost any measure they appear to be in serious need of attention.

This report attempts to provide information that will help all of us to better understand the migrant workers who enter Montana. Hopefully, such understanding will lead to the kind of action to enable these transient neighbors to more fully realize their higher potential.

THE MIGRANT WORKER IN MONTANA

The Mexican-American migrant worker is primarily employed in agriculture, usually in sugar beets, beans or fruit; he moves one or more times while in Montana, which is only one of his work locations during an annual migratory trek. Migrant workers are usually inexperienced in non-farm work. Many have little or no education and have minimal knowledge of the employment alternatives outside of agriculture (6:4). The families, therefore, tend to stay in farm work, where they have had experience and have gained confidence in their capabilities, even though the pay and working conditions often leave much to be desired.

Between 1,500 and 2,000 workers (plus their families) entered Montana in 1971, roughly 20% of the number arriving 10 years ago. Mechanization and the closure of three processing plants (only two remain - at Sidney and Billings) have taken their toll. The workers are part of a national group of migrants estimated to be at least 500,000. Of the total migrant worker population in the U.S., Mexican-Americans number 25%, and predominate among the mid-continent and west coast workers (4:3). Each year a stream of approximately 125,000 people leave Texas and disperse in four or five directions. (refer to Chart I)

In 1967, 50% of the migrant worker population was under 25 years of age and half of these were in the 14-17 year old category (4:3). These figures suggest the high proportion of large families with many dependents. As they travel, the family head tries to find work for as many family members as possible.

The typical Mexican-American migrant family has over 6 children. Attained educational level is seldom beyond the eighth grade, averaging fifth grade. Some studies indicate that no more than 5% reach high school (9:2). The incidence of large families also explains in part why per capita income for Mexican-American migrants is far lower than for Anglo-Americans or even Negroes (7:577).

Among 60 migrant families interviewed in Montana during the summer of 1970, the average number of children per family was between 6 and 7. The average age of the parents was 41 years. The average number of years of education for parents was 4.5 years. Half of the parents interviewed spoke very little or no English (9:106). The unhappy correlary of these statistics is the fact that agricultural mechanization will quite likely reduce the need for migrant labor drastically over the next ten years and thus displace workers unprepared for alternative vocations. Migrant laborers with large families will be poor prospects for new forms of employment because of advancing age, lack of education, and poor mastery of English (9:106)

Migrant workers have thus become part of a circular process from which they are largely unable to escape. Migrancy is frequently associated with such factors as racial discrimination, illiteracy, ill health, and historical accident. At the same time, migrancy promotes conditions of occupational inflexibility, educational disadvantage, severe medical and psychiatric problems, and isolation from the main stream of American society. In effect, migrant workers often fall under no one's jurisdiction. They move along rural backroads out of everyone's sight and mind (5:3, 14:10).

The entry of Mexican-Americans into the agricultural labor market began during the development of extensive agriculture in the Southwestern United States; farmers were beginning the shift to agribusiness. Extensive cropping methods involving large land areas and large investments in capital and equipment were used to produce a specialized product for national and international consumption.

This demanded a labor pool larger than the local area could provide. Simultaneously with the growth of southwest agriculture, the Mexican government constructed a major north-south railroad with the assistance of foreign capital. The railroad brought large numbers of Mexican workers to settle in border towns. Many of them were soon working in the fields and orchards of southwestern farmers. Mexican-

American farm laborers were generally seen to be "docile, tractable, and hard working" (4:2-4).

But one of the conditions associated with such agricultural work in both Montana and the southwest is the sporadic nature of labor needs. During most of the year labor demands are very low in proportion to land and crop size. Moreover, migrant workers must face the uncertainties of weather conditions. In fact, uncertainty is endemic to all of agriculture. Over and above weather conditions there is, for the grower, the problem of getting enough workers to take care of his crop. For the worker there is the acute uncertainty of getting enough work to support his family (3:5). Family migration patterns (which are unique to Mexican-Americans among most migrant workers) have traditionally appealed to growers. Migrant families provide the continuity and reliability which individual workers lack. When good relationships between workers and growers are established, as they frequently are, migrant families tend to return regularly year after year.

Until child labor laws intervened children were encouraged to work along with their elders, and in many instances, made a substantial contribution to the family income (7:88). Present policy with regard to the use of migrant workers is largely controlled through provisions of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. The ASCS administers the Sugar Act and lays farm requirements that children under 14 cannot work in sugar beet production and that children 14 and 15 years of age can work no more than 8 hours in any one day. Penalties for infringement of these and other requirements involve deduction in Sugar Act payments (15).

Nevertheless, the 1970 study of migrant families in the Yellowstone Valley disclosed very few children beyond 12 years of age in the summer school program and an extraordinarily large proportion of supposedly "of Age" teenagers in the fields; apparently the tradition of family work teams continues despite official action to minimize child labor.

Cultural and Social Background

Mexican-Americans are both the oldest and newest minority in the U.S. The length of residency of the Mexican-American population in the U.S. may be anywhere from a few weeks to three centuries.

Between the battle of San Jacinto in 1831 and the Gadsen purchase in 1853, the U.S. acquired what are now the states of Texas, New Mexico, and parts of Colorado, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and California. Perhaps 75,000 Mexicans lived in these areas at the time of acquisition (5:11-12).

The first large influx of Mexicans into the U.S. began in 1909 and 1910 and gathered momentum into the 1920's. Many of these immigrants returned to Mexico with the advent of the depression - some of them involuntarily. The second great wave of Mexican immigrants entered the U.S. in the 1950's and '60's (7:10). Between 1957 and 1966 more people arrived by way of visa from Mexico than from any other country (7:62). In that period nearly 420,000 Mexican citizens were admitted to permanent residence (11:15).

Mexico has remained the largest source of aliens for temporary farm work (7:63). In 1917 special legislation was passed in Congress permitting and regulating admission of such temporary farm workers. This so called "Bracero Program" lapsed for a time after World War II, but was resumed in 1951 as "Public Law 78".

The entry of Bracero's to this country has constituted a serious obstacle to any efforts at consolidating the economic position of domestic farm workers. In 1963 the Department of Labor decreed that job offers to Mexicans would have to be certified before entry could be gained and in 1964 the Bracero Program was "permanently" terminated (7:69). Since that date most migrant workers in Montana have been U.S. citizens from South Texas.

Curtailment of such wholesale immigration has forced segments of U.S. agriculture to mechanize more rapidly. But, at the same time, it has somewhat decreased competition and has permitted Mexican-Americans to make significant social and economic gains. However, it remains relatively easy for Mexicans to enter this country

illegally as "wetbacks", (7:76-77).

Generally speaking, Mexican immigrants are younger than their counterparts from other countries, less skilled, and more likely to be males. They enter the U.S. during the most fruitful years of their lives (7:69-72). Between 1950 and 1960 the population of Mexican-Americans increased by 51% as against 37% for Anglo-Americans and 49% for other non-whites. The annual rate of increase during this same period has been computed at 4.1% for Mexican-Americans as against 3.3% for the U.S. population as a whole. Projections made prior to the 1970 census estimated a range of 5.3 to 5.8 million Mexican-Americans in the United States in 1970 as compared with 3.8 million in 1960 (7:105-6).

Little can be said about discernable differences among first, second, and third generation Mexican-Americans. Such statistics are not dealt with by the census count. However, natives differ sharply in age from foreign born Mexican-Americans. The median age of Spanish-surname individuals in 1960 varied from 13.1 years for children born of native parents, to 24.1 years for natives born of foreign or mixed heritage, to 43.3 years for the foreign born. The low median age for children of native parents derives from the fact that those born of native parents have the largest component of children (7:137). When first and second generations of Spanish surnames are considered together, they accounted for about 45% of the Mexican-Americans in the Southwest in 1970 (7:106-7).

Mexican-Americans tend to move out of agricultural work as their length of tenure in this country increases, as indicated by census statistics for 1960 (1970 data is not available as of this publication date):

- 13.6% of foreign born Mexican-Americans were engaged in farm labor;
- 3.6% of those born of foreign or mixed parentage were engaged in farm labor;
- 2.5% born of native parentage were engaged in farm labor (7:218).

Housing and Community Relations

Housing for migrant workers is inspected yearly by local officials of the Employment Service. An inspector examining migrant housing in one of Montana's beet growing areas in 1970 made the following report:

> "The housing in this area is not good. I found that the housing is worse now than it was three years ago when I inspected the housing. On Friday it rained and while we were inspecting housing we found a small family living in a trailer house that had three roof leaks, one in the kitchen and two in the bedroom. They had pans on top of the bed to catch the rain water and, to add to their misery, there was no heat in the trailer. They had two small children and since it was raining the temperature was cold . . . There are some acceptable units in this area but the unacceptable ratio is predominant in this area at the time of this inspection" (13).

Federal housing regulations for migrant workers were issued in 1968 by the Bureau of Employment Security of the U.S. Department of Labor (14). Among other things, the standards, to be effective in 1972, will require that bathing, laundry, and hand-washing facilities, supplied with hot and cold water under pressure, shall be provided for the use of all occupants. Further, they require that family groups with one or more children six years or older have a room or partitioned sleeping area for husband and wife and approximately 50 square feet for each occupant (13). If a farmer in Montana does his own recruiting or has the sugar company recruit for him, federal housing regulations do not apply. However, since most workers are secured through the Employment Service, federal housing regulations generally apply.

An official of the Montana-Wyoming Beet Growers Association reported that some growers are reluctant to make the necessary renovations to meet federal requirements because of the short-term stay of most migrant workers. Likewise, "interference from regulations and various do-gooder groups is what makes the Mexicans so angry, because it is forcing farmers to turn to mechanization and they are going to be out of a job" (13).

However, despite this kind of reaction by the employing group the rate of overcrowding among Mexican-Americans nationally was more than four times that of Anglo-Americans. These statistics are associated with the fact that Mexican-Americans tend not only to have large families but also tend to live in smaller housing units (7:250).

It is often said that the migrant workers are not welcomed in local communities where they come to work - only tolerated (6:1). Local citizens will often make obvious, and usually successful, efforts to keep the migrant workers out of traditional social meeting places. Frequently the local bar becomes the only acceptable setting for social participation. Of course, similar comments can be made about short-term workers in other occupations, such as oil-field workers or even men in the armed services. Obviously, this does not help to make the migrant worker part of the community (6:14-15). In effect, migrants can be said to live in a relatively "community-less" society - adrift within the large American society, with effects damaging to both them and society at large.

On the other hand, findings from the 1970 study of employers of migrants and local leaders in the Yellowstone Valley disclosed that among those interviewed, "almost 90% said they enjoyed having the migrants in their community". Most local people thought the migrants felt welcome (9:111).

Interviews with migrant parents seemed to support this perception, though with some qualifications. Very few of the migrant parents indicated any feeling of discrimination against them by the local citizens. As a rule, however, they frequented only local theatres and taverns (9:105).

The Employment Base in Montana

In 1970, sugar beets were planted on 56,900 irrigated acres in Montana. The estimated 1971 acreage is 49,000 acres. Though the crop does not account for a large portion of Montana's total farm income, the beet enterprise is the primary product in the major

producing areas of the Yellowstone Valley (10:3-4).

Five geographic areas supply the two sugar factory districts in Montana. The Great Western United Corporation contracts for sugar beets in the mid-Yellowstone Valley, Milk River Valley, Bitterroot Valley and Townsend Valley. The Holly Sugar Cooporation has one refinery in the extreme lower Yellowstone Valley at Sidney (10:7).

The largest source of migrant labor is provided through either sugar factory representatives or the State Employment Service. Growers seem to have very little, if any, trouble securing labor at the right time to care for the thinning and weeding processes. Local labor is ususlly used in non-beet crops, while pre-harvest work, including irrigation, is done by family labor (10:10-11).

The estimated 1800 beet thinners who came to Montana in the summer of 1971 were fewer by 1,000 than in 1970. This reduction is primarily due to the closing of the Holly Sugar plant in Hardin in early 1971. According to the chief of farm placement for the State Employment Service, sugar beet work 10 to 15 years ago attracted 10,000 migrant workers plus their families into Montana. Since then, mechanization and the changing sugar market have severely reduced the demand for labor. At one time Montana had five sugar refineries. The plants at Chinook and Missoula, as well as at Hardin, have closed (13).

The farm placement office foresees that machines will continue to replace beet workers. Mechanical thinners are gradually becoming sufficiently effective to be more economical than field workers. Furthermore, with greater precision of planting and weed control, workers are able to handle large acreages than formerly (13).

Some Economic Consequences of Seasonal Agricultural Labor

In 1960, male members of the Mexican-American and Black minorities together held 57% of all farm labor jobs; and even while the demand for unskilled workers continues to decline, the competition for jobs of this type increases among members of these minorities (7:26-27). Competition prevails in an occupation where cooperation may be

indispensable for economic improvement.

The Christian Century of May 3, 1961, summed up the conditions quite well:

> For others have come minimum wages, workman's compensation, unemployment insurance, the advantages of collective bargaining . . . (but) most federal, social, and labor legislation contains specific exemptions for farm labor, and most state and county labor and welfare laws provide that non-residents shall be ineligible or, like the federal laws, exempt agricultural workers (6:4).

What constitutes probably the most serious problem confronted by the migrant worker in obtaining necessary services is the need to establish residency. His occupation renders him unable to accommodate himself to these requirements. However, recent decisions of the Federal Supreme Court may alleviate some of these problems. These decisions have challenged the constitutionality of local residency requirements.

In 1968 the national average hourly wage rate for farm workers without room and board was $1.43. Those workers (about one half the total) who combined farm and non-farm work (approximately 38% of the total work force) averaged 168 days of work during the year (4:3). Migrants who worked only at farm labor were employed an average of 82 days in 1965 (8:35). Modest wages, plus the relatively short working season, combine to produce a very low annual income compared with the remainder of the population.

An official of the Montana-Wyoming Beet Growers Association estimates that beet workers in Montana make "anywhere from $1.75 to $3.50 an hour, depending on how fast they can make that hoe move" (13). Federal and state officials estimate an average annual family income of from $2,500 to $3,000 for Montana migrant laborers. However, there seems to be considerable difference of opinion regarding the accuracy of income figures. Welfare officials are convinced that annual migrant income is low enough for them to qualify for free day care for their children through the Federal Aid to Dependent Children program. Income ranging from $1,560 a year with

one child to $3,420 a year with six children are maximum qualifying figures for this program (13).

In 1960, 35% of the Spanish-surname families in the Southwestern U.S. fell below the poverty line of $3,000, as against less than 16% of Anglo and almost 42% of all non-white families in the same region. Migrants who were employed only in farm work during 1965 received an annual income of about $1,000; those who also worked outside of agriculture earned $1,700, of which $1,200 was from non-farm jobs (7:20).

Educational Status and Needs

Extreme disparity of school systems in different locales inhabited by migrants suggests (according to one author) that the Mexican-American child is rendered critically incapable of adjusting to the requirements of the larger social system. The fact that more education fails to improve the income position of Mexican-Americans in porportion to that of the majority" is a matter of considerable social significance (7:170, 196).

In 1960, Mexican-Americans 14 years and older averaged "about four years less schooling than Anglos and one and one half years less than non-whites". By the time they reach grades six to eight, Mexican-American migrant children are already two to three years behind their Anglo age-mates (9:2).

In the Southwestern schools, where Montana migrants live in the winter season, attendance standards are frequently left unenforced for Mexican-American children, particularly in rural areas (7:24). In the Southwest nearly 28% of the Mexican-Americans, as against 15% of the non-whites and only 4% of the Anglos, can be classified as functional illiterates, with the equivalent of 4 years or less of education. Improvement is very slow, since the drop-out rate is considerably higher for Mexican-Americans than other segments of society. Whereas 21.2% of all persons in the Southwest were in school at ages 20 to 21, only 12.1% of Spanish surname persons were still enrolled at that age (7:144, 147).

A great part of the problem of migrant children is the depressing impact of the alien world outside the home. The children of migrant workers are usually treated extremely well by their parents and families, but they soon come to understand that the outside culture particularly the school, contains less understanding and affection.

The peculiar nature of the problem of education for migrant children resides in the migrant condition itself. What opportunity does the migrant have of achieving any coherence of educational experience? Is it indeed better to expose the child to short term educational experiences or spare him the likely embarrassment of an unfamiliar enterprise?

A program of educational services for Montana migrants is provided through the State Department of Public Instruction. Children from 4 to 18 years are included in projects financed by a federal grant ($610,000 in 1971). In 1970 the federal government spent a total of $50 million for migrant education in the United States (13).

The migrant education projects were located at Billings, Sidney, Glendive, Fairview, Rosebud, Terry, Hysham, Fromberg, Warden, and Kinsey in 1970. Staff members from the Center for Planning and Development at Montana State University undertook an analysis of these projects to determine the effectiveness of the schools and to document the existing status of migrant children and their families (9).

The migrant education program in Montana is directed at four major objectives: (1) health improvement, (2) development of oral and written language skills, (3) curriculum enrichment, and (4) active school participation. Fundamentally, the program has been set up to broaden the children's perspectives by motivating them educationally and vocationally. Significant efforts are also made within the program to help young Mexican-Americans to appreciate their own cultural heritage.

The major curriculum emphasis in the Montana program has been language arts. Activities are designed to encourage the use of oral and written English. In addition to a special consultant who works

with staff members, several Mexican-American teachers serve as resource people for all aspects of the program, but particularly in helping design the curriculum to meet unique migrant children needs.

A second major curriculum emphasis was the improvement of self image or self concepts of the youngsters. The kind of individual attention which is highly important for such an endeavor was facilitated where project classes were small. Project aides gave youngsters the individualized attention they could not receive from instructors. Most of the aides were bilingual (some of them were teenage members of migrant families).

Field trips were frequently used as a means to provide curriculum broadening and enrichment. Specifically, such trips were intended to help the children better understand how the larger society functions and to provide new experiences in that society. They also provided opportunities to use the English language to ask questions, and to find out more about the people in the communities where their parents work.

Children were provided with a nutritionally balanced breakfast and lunch, somewhat compensating for the often inadequate meals served by tired mothers who worked in the fields all day. And, in accord with the major goal of health improvement, children were given physical examinations to locate any serious physical or health problems. If problems were discovered treatment was initiated.

The Sidney project undertook a program for teenage migrant aides. They were given the opportunity to work at local business establishments for a short time each day. This provided exposure to non-migrant activities and gave the teenagers some vacational training in an occupation which would quite likely pay better and be more permanent than the migrant work activities in which their parents were engaged. Also, the young people served as bridges to local citizens and community leaders and, therefore, had an opportunity to help increase the local citizen understanding of the Mexican-Americans in the community. The 1970 program made additional efforts at

involving both the local community as well as migrant parents in the projects. Most projects sponsored a "fiesta" (community party) to which all migrant and local citizens were invited.

Another and very significant part of the 1970 program in most of the projects was the nursery and pre-school programs. Youngsters included were from less than a year in age to first grade. The setting was used for informal engagement in conversation (to help build English skills) and games which would increase physical and conceptualizing skills. The formation of personal hygiene and cleanliness habits was stressed at all ages. For all children there were opportunities for the enhancement of appreciation for their Mexican-American heritage in contrast with the Anglo-American cultural heritage.

An assumption is frequently made that migrant children have a weak self-image. This is to say they exhibit a low degree of self-confidence and generally underestimate their ability to succeed at interpersonal relations, social relationships, and education. One of the goals in Montana's migrant education program has been to improve self-concept by helping the migrant child achieve enough success so that he gains a feeling of confidence and an ability to function in American society.

Since the migrant youngster livesin a relatively strong family group, and the self-concept problem only arises when the child moves from family or peer group into the main stream of socity, program activities attempt to build on the strength of the family unit. Children were encouraged to develop a sense of self-confidence in an environment where they received generous amounts of attention and concern.

The office for the migrant education program in the State Superintendent's Office contains a teletype which links the migrant education projects in Montana with a central data processing center in Montana with a central data processing center in Little Rock, Arkansas, and which enables personnel in Montana to receive current information on each of the migrant pupils. Every state involved in

the migrant education program is tied to the data bank, so that teachers will be able to more readily determine where their pupuls stand (13).

Migrant parents who were interviewed in the Montana State University study expressed nearly universal appreciation for the opportunities afforded their children through the summer program. Many of them were aware of the declining opportunities for field work because of mechanization and were convinced of the pressing need for education. However, the study also indicated a general ignorance among local employers of migrant educational needs and existing programs. Most of those interviewed considered a program for migrant children to be a worthwhile expenditure of Federal funds, although they did not understand the nature of the program. A number of migrant parents gave the summer education program credit for promoting and facilitating understanding between themselves and the local citizens (9:105-111).

Other Services

Most local people interviewed in the MSU study felt that migrant families received health services adequate to meet their needs. Information gathered in 1967 (in California) indicated that the average per capita expenditure for health care for migrant workers in that state was $36. The disparity in expenditure among minority groups in that state is revealing: $340.30 was spent the same year in per capita health services for Indians (1:4).

A large part of the problem of providing services for migrant workers can be traced to their frequent reluctance (or inability) to take time off from field work to seek needed assistance, which is complicated by the tendency for rural counties and remote areas to have limited services that are not readily accessable (2:2). Public agencies are likely to provide emergency services, but standard services are usually limited by the shortage of funds (3:6). In 1971 the Montana State Health Department received a $16,000 Federal grant, to assure the responsibility of caring for

the health of migrant workers; eight clinics were established in doctor's offices from Sidney to Columbus (13).

The Director of the program in 1971 indicates there is high incidents of both major and minor illness among migrant workers. She noted that until 1969, when the program was begun, health services for migrants were provided only on a sporadic basis. Most minor illnesses remained unattended, and no organized system of health care existed to meet the specific needs of migrants. Health clinics in 1971 served migrants in Sidney, Columbus, Terry, Bridger, Miles City, Worden, Laurel, and Glendive (13). In addition the Holly Sugar Corporation maintains a program of health insurance for workers serving growers in their production area.

Social welfare professionals face similar frustrations arising from the migrant's mobility as well as the diversity of his disability. In the words of one author, "it will probably test the ability of the social work profession to apply social work concepts creatively in unstructured circumstances" (3:12). Efforts to take both ameliorative and preventive measure in dealing with the welfare needs of migrant workers are difficult because of the mobility factors inherent in the migrant situation.

Finally, it must be noted that probably the most extensive contact of any agency of government with the Mexican-Americans has been legal authority. Contact with the police, and especially with immigration authorities, has generated a high degree of mistrust toward government institutions on the part of migrants. Mexican-American migrants have often found themselves identified as aliens, even though they are U.S. citizens, unless they carry official papers to prove their identity (5:92-5).

Many concerned Mexican-Americans see the educational gap as their most crucial problem (7:142). As an analysis of the urban-rural continuum emphasized, "there is clear evidence that increased education pays off in terms of concrete economic gains for the Mexican-American, and their main hope for continuing progress lies in increasing their educational attainment and job qualifications" (8:219).

What is called for first, the same author says, is "a good basic educational program (including adult education) that respects and takes account of the minority ethnic culture and values, but does not use them as an excuse for evading the complexities of our urban-industrial society" (8:22).

However, educators often fail to adequately appreciate the possibility that schools can be modified to meet the needs of migrant children. Unfortunately, very little material exists on the teaching of Mexican-Americans, and that which is available tends to justify the failure of existing schools "by placing the blame for non-adaptation on the Mexican family", thus absolving educators of blame (5:32).

Compensatory education programs often serve primarily to placate spokesman for the ethnic population (5:82). Such programs require little institutional modification and frequently "strengthen the role of school administrators and simply create new functions within the educational establishment" (7:158).

A professional educator who works closely with Mexican-American agricultural workers in California suggests the need for standardized curriculum in schools which migrant children attend. Thus, they would not be constantly moving from one system into an entirely different one. He recommends also that the children of migrant workers have the opportunity to attend schools year-round. They would then have some opportunity to overcome the disadvantages under which many of them presently exist. If children of migrant parents are to enter a more satisfactory income status, special programs of this nature seem crucial.

Furthermore, it may be of considerable importance that an educational experience begin in pre-primary school years, and that education through the primary grades be bilingual. Since most Mexican-American children will have had little exposure to English, the disadvantages of beginnnng school in a relatively foreign language are obvious. In a bilingual environment the child would be more able to obtain a foundation for an educational experience

in his native language and acquire the use of oral and written expression of the English language as he proceeds (12).

Unionization

There is substantial evidence that educational opportunities follow rather than precede income improvement (8:219-20). As in other occupations, unionization may represent an avenue to income improvement. And furthermore, insofar as stablization of the agricultural work force is an objective. unionization represents one significant possibility (12).

Unionization of migrant workers began as early as 1905, through efforts by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). By 1913, 8% of the workers were organized. However, growing radicalism in the union generated a loss of support, particularly from elements outside the union. Only in the decade of the '60's has a degree of success been attained particularly through the efforts of Cesar Chavez; Chavez is the Mexican-American son of a migrant family who heads the National Farm Workers Association (begun in 1962). By 1968 this union had forced pay raises from 10 California grape growers. However, a continuing jurisdictional struggle between the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (under the leadership of Chavez), a union affiliated with the AFL-CIO, and the Teamsters Union has created serious problems for the success of unionization (4:4-7). Effectiveness of income improvement efforts through unionization or otherwise will probably depend heavily on the continued financial and economic support of other segments of organized labor, government, and the public at large because of the weak power base of migrants.

Major goals which might be met through unionization include (1) the improvement of farm labor wages to a parity level with industrial wage levels, and (2) stablization of Mexican-American migrant families through the acquisition of a greater measure of security and self-esteem.

At the same time, it must be noted that unionization efforts

conflict with some of the existing realities of agricultural policy in the United States. The resolution of some of these conflicts may require adjustments in the prevailing economic and social values of Montana and American society. The prospect of increased mechanization must remain a critical factor in unionization efforts (particularly if these efforts are relatively weak) since wage increases will only tend to hasten the displacement of workers by technological advancement.

Unionization cannot be viewed as panacea, as it often is presented by union leaders. It is only one among several possible alternatives, which include job training and placement, more effective employment information services through improved job market instititions, and special income maintenance programs.

Job Training

The most recent manpower report of the President indicates that "despite efforts to strengthen services to the Mexican-Americans, the Federal Manpower Development and Training Assistance (MDTA) programs has not been very successful in reaching the most disadvantaged members of this group, particularly in rural areas". Training projects have catered largely to urban groups and urban jobs. Many Mexican-Americans mistrust the employment service which operates MDTA "in the belief that it cannot offer them jobs or will categorize them as farm workers and return them to the migrant stream they are trying to leave" (8:206). The employment service has not so far been able to effectively counter these attitudes.

Unfortunately, the local employment office usually has little information about job opportunities in other parts of the country. And because local activities are geared to the boundary lines of particular communities and states, even local job markets are often not clearly understood by the existing administrative process within the public employment service (8:284).

The President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty (in a 1967 report entitled The People Left Behind) recommended that

public employment offices integrate mobility and relocation assistance into an area manpower planning and development program (8:72, 16). Such a program is now functioning in several areas of Montana, under the Cooperative Area Manpower Program (CAMPS).

In 1963 the Department of Labor under the Manpower Development and Training Act received authority to conduct a "limited, experimental labor mobility program that provided financial aid on a need basis". During the fiscal year 1968, the U.S Employment Service and 18 state employment agencies participated in labor mobility research projects. The effort was directed at providing information on how the U.S.E.S. could "best operate a national program involving interstate cooperation" (8:277).

The results of the MDTA project indicate that a considerable variety of specialized supportive services will be required in any nation-wide mobility program, particularly where the rural poor (particularly migrants) are involved. Such services will necessarily include "pre-relocation counseling, assistance in obtaining housing, orientation in the demand area, health care, financial counseling, help in obtaining transportation, clothing, furniture, and in some cases, help in preparing applications for employment, school enrollment, public assistance, and other public and private services" (8:282).

The findings of this project emphasize the potential importance of a national perspective for local employment services, to provide the nesessary link for inter-state placement services. At the same time, local employment service agencies any need to provide a much more coordinated and comprehensive program of social services to the mobile poor in new job areas. Though the employment services will usually not have the resources to provide all such necessary services, it could nevertheless take the initiative in involving social welfare organizations in these kinds of activities (8:285-287). The President's Advisory Commission on rural poverty (in the report noted earlier) emphasizes the need to "make the migration process operate so that a higher proportion of those who migrate actually benefit from migration" (8:272).

The major thrust of manpower training programs emphasizes departure from the seasonal labor circuit to other employment possibilities, usually of a non-agricultural nature and which will require job training. The emphasis on "mobility" in the MDTA approach is only one among several approaches suggested by the President's Commission on Rural Poverty, which heavily emphasizes creation of jobs and opportunities for rural workers where they are (8:272).

In sum, an adequate employment policy will probably require counseling, re-training, and relocation of migrant workers. And, while the federal govennment will necessarily play a significant role, programs involving relocation will probably best be carried out at the lower levels of government (8:273).

Rural Economic Development

The report of the National Commission on rural poverty suggests one approach to the problem of rural poverty of which the migrant worker's plight is so significant an example. The report describes the existence of discrimination against rural places as one important factor militating against rural dwellers. The commission proposes that economic growth be promoted in rural areas by various types of subsidies, including grants, low interest loans, and the construction of industrial sites for new industries (8:227-228). Such an approach might provide more stable employment opportunities for migrant workers than now exists.

One critic suggests that these recommendations are overly concerned with place, at the expense of people. He notes that between 1945 and 1960 all of the net gain in new jobs took place in large metropolitan areas. The gain in jobs in smaller cities and towns was offset by losses in agricultural, extractive and other resource-based jobs (8:225-238).

A variety of barriers to significant industrial development exist in rural areas, particularly in those locations where migrant workers maintain their "permanent" homes. Whatever advantages rural areas may appear to have in terms of a relatively cheap and plentiful

labor force, relatively cheap land and easy access to work and recreation, the disadvantages remain considerable. These include such disadvantages as a low level of services, relatively few business contacts, a relatively untrained labor force, bad connections with long distance traffic, deficiencies in cultural and educational facilities, and the existence in rural areas of a serious mistrust of industrialization.

Firms frequently find it advantageous to locate close to their competitors rather than at some distance. Thus, workers in urban areas who suffer from decline in economic activities are more likely than workers in small towns or rural areas to find equivalent jobs in other firms. Hanson considers this to be a significant improvement in stability over that enjoyed by the rural labor force (particularly migrants) for whom stability "is too often based on a lack of real employment alternatives for workers" (8:232-234).

Although the prospects are dim for attracting enough industry to the countryside to eliminate the need for mobility, a good argument can be made for federal assistance in education, health, and vocational training in lagging areas, along with relocation subsidies and information programs to facilitate regional migration (8:w38). If such programs were adequate migrant workers might be influenced to re-locate premanently where jobs are available, and share these special services would help increase future opportunities for their children.

Human Resource Development

If federal expenditures to attract industry to underdevelpped regions are un-economic and largely ineffective, programs to influence the quality of human resources in lagging regions benefit the people in both these regions and the nation as a whole. However, programs aimed at upgrading the human resources of minority groups and rural agricultural workers in general must include an understanding and appreciation of the traditions and values of such groups.

But at the same time these programs must also recognize the need to prepare individual members of these groups for life in the larger society, should they wish to choose such a life. Presently, many individuals do not have this choice.

A major stigma carried by the migrant minority group is dependency on public support for many basic needs; this often leads to feelings of inadequacy and implies incompetency to succeed. "Minority" often carries the connotation that individuals have not yet grown to adulthood and consequently must be dealt with through practical combinations of tolerance, forebearance, persuasion, oversight, firmness and, occasionally, force.

In 1964 the Economic Opportunity Act was passed by Congress as an alternative to dependency. This legislation promoted a wide range of agencies to deal with low income groups. Unfortunately, many of these agencies considered the Spanish-speaking minority "an undifferentiated demographic clump". Thus, anti-poverty programs have increased the perplexity of many Mexican-Americans who were already concerned at the failure of local services to meet their actual needs.

The Mexican-American community has discovered that a middle layer of political power can intervene between itself and the best intentions of federal programs. Representatives and spokesmen of identifiable poverty groups, unlike agency representatives, have come to their tasks "with no sub-systems of influence, much less of power, behind them". In this respect also, migrant poverty groups find themselves operating under quite different parameters from other groups, namely, that they are hindered from forming into constituencies to influence the policies of public instructions (11:67-73).

Thus, despite the promise of the Economic Opportunity Act, dependency has continued to prevail. Programs inaugurated on behalf of the migrants by new-born poverty foundations and non-profit corporations soon develop the patterns of traditional agencies. Funds for administration were given priority over funds for direct

individual services. In many respects the OEO program has been less successful than we might have hoped, particularly with respect to migrant workers and their families.

Conclusions

There is a paramount need to direct Mexican-Americans away from the migratory situation as jobs are replaced by machines. Thus, considerable emphasis upon vocational training and job placement services seems necessary. The expansion and clarification of employment services will be crucial.

In all of these efforts, it must be emphasized that welfare assistance programs represent important but interim and stop-gap programs of a hopefully supportive nature. Programs emphasizing basic education, job retraining, and vocational rehabilitation will more permanently deal with the long-range needs of the migrant worker and his family.

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